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ABSTRACT

This project delivered traditional parenting skills to participants at area family centers through reading and critically examining issues raised in children's literature. Recruitment efforts were unsuccessful at two Arsenal Family Centers; sufficient participants were recruited at the Providence Family Support Center where the 16-week course was taught. After the group and facilitator conducted an informal assessment of need, the decision that the group made was to function as a support group allowing for open enrollment. The group was not mandatory for participants; therefore, attendance for each participant was not on an ongoing basis. Weekly door prizes and the children's books served as an incentive for participation. Following the original curriculum, each lesson included the reading aloud of a children's book, a writing activity, and questions for discussion. In this adaptation, the project added other topics such as children's development issues, stress management for parents, discipline, and talking to children about death, divorce, and loss. The course culminated with a party and recognition ceremony for participants. Participants' written and verbal evaluations indicated the sessions helped them become more aware of parent/child issues. They reported feeling their involvement in the class was worthwhile. (Appendixes include the adapted curriculum guide, evaluation comments, recruitment flyer, and supplemental materials.) (YLB)

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**PARENTING SKILLS THROUGH
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
IN
FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS:**

ADAPTATION OF EXISTING CURRICULUM [98-5026, CFDA 84.002]

Judith Aaronson, Project Director
Penny Klosterman-Lang

Goodwill Literacy Initiative

1996-1997

Goodwill Industries of Pittsburgh
2600 East Carson Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15203

\$5,000

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ABSTRACT PAGE

Project No. _____

Grant Recipient: Goodwill Industries of Pittsburgh
2600 E. Carson Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15203

Program Name: PARENTING SKILLS THROUGH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN
FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS:
ADAPTATION OF EXISTING CURRICULUM [98-5026, CFDA 84.002]

Grant Allocation: \$5,000

Project Period: 1996-97

Project Director: Judith Aaronson, Director of Education Services

Project Purpose:

The purpose of this project was to deliver traditional parenting skills to participants at area family centers through reading and critically examining issues raised in children's literature. This format was utilized to deliver a model of service that will help adults realize their potential as parents, to train staff to continue implementing this curriculum after this project ends. The family centers are committed to the elimination of duplicate services, the support of participants and increasing the availability of community services.

Project Outcomes:

After initially struggling with recruitment at two of the Arsenal Family Centers, the program was then conducted at Providence Family Support Center. Written and verbal evaluations by the participants indicate that the sessions helped them become more aware of parent/child issues. They reported feeling that their involvement in the class was worthwhile and that they felt relaxed about expressing their thoughts in a group setting.

Impact:

The original purpose of the program was to deliver the curriculum in two different family centers. As stated in our interim report, recruitment efforts at two of the centers did not produce a sufficient number of participants. At Providence Family Support Center where our efforts were met with enthusiasm, and the director and on-site staff were active recruiters, we were able to begin and finish a group. The women met for 2 hours, once a week, for 16 weeks. After the group and facilitator conducted an informal assessment of need, it was decided that the group was to function as a support group allowing for open enrollment. The group was not mandatory for participants; therefore, attendance for each participant was not on an on-going basis. Weekly door prizes and the children's books served as an incentive for participation.

PARENTING SKILLS THROUGH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS:

ADAPTATION OF EXISTING CURRICULUM

Introduction

This project was designed to adapt the existing curriculum "Parenting Skills through Children's Literature" at area family centers. The original curriculum was designed to deliver traditional parenting skills to participants through reading and critically examining issues raised in children's literature. This format was utilized to deliver a model of service that would help adults realize their potential as parents and to train agency staff to continue implementing the curriculum after the project ends. The family centers were chosen as sites for the implementation of the curriculum because of their strong commitment to families and the support of the staff.

Goodwill Literacy Initiative's staff member, Penny Lang, under the direction of Judith Aaronson, Director of Educational Services, and Arsenal Family and Children's Center staff began to plan for the class. Flyers were produced and distributed in the family center area in nearby human service facilities, including local libraries, churches, the local Welfare Offices and WIC Offices. Books and supplies were ordered in anticipation of the start of the sessions.

This project report would be useful for anyone working with parents in high schools, community colleges and community based organizations. Copies of this report are available through:

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education
Advance Office
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
800-922-2283

WPALRC
5347 William Flynn Highway
Gibsonia, PA 15044

Statement of the Problem

Family Center participants are generally single, economically disadvantaged women who did not finish high school. Isolation from the general community and little family support are common problems. The premise for the project was based on the desire of Goodwill Literacy Initiative staff to work with an existing family center because of their strong commitment to families and improving parent-child relationships.

Program Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of this project was to improve the quality of parent/child relationships by illustrating child development issues through children's literature. To reach this goal Goodwill staff developed the following objectives:

1. Implement the existing curriculum, "Parenting Skills Through Children's Literature", in a family center setting.
2. Encourage self-sufficiency by training the family center staff to continue to deliver this curriculum once the project has ended.
3. Through administration of a written pretest, assess participants' initial knowledge of parenting and their attitudes toward parenting.
4. Through administration of a written post-test, assess change in knowledge of parenting and attitudes toward parenting as a result of participation in the lessons.
5. Increase the amount of time parents spend reading to their children at home.
6. Encourage parents to participate in adult continuing education services.

PROCEDURES

Phase I

Summer 1996

Goodwill Literacy Initiative developed contact with Providence Family Support Center and Arsenal Family and Children's Center to discuss the possibilities of presenting the curriculum to their participants.

Phase II

September 1996

Efforts to recruit participants began in September with the development of a flyer. (See Appendix) The flyer was then distributed in a number of locations including the following agencies:

Public Assistance Office
Children's Youth Services
Local Newspaper
Libraries
Local Shops

Recruitment efforts continued for approximately 6 weeks prior to classes beginning at Providence Family Support where a parenting group had recently been established.

Phase III

January 1997

In January 1997 the course was taught at Providence Family for a period of 16 weeks, culminating with a party and recognition ceremony for participants.

Objective 1

Our primary focus was to engage at-risk parents in the learning process in order to improve their parenting skills through the use of an existing curriculum, *Parenting Skills Through Children's Literature [98-5026, CFDA 84.002]*. The 353-funded program year 1994-1995 project was used in a community college setting and proved to be a valuable tool for engaging reluctant learners. Implementing this curriculum in a family center setting encouraged the parents to meet on a regular basis, encourage support, and share each others ideas. Using children's literature as a bases for instruction and discussion allowed parents enrolled at the center whose reading skills were poor to be an active participant. Books used were chosen for their readability and cultural sensitivity. The group met for 16 weeks for two hours each session.

Following the original curriculum each lesson included the reading aloud of a children's book, a writing activity, and questions for discussion. In this adaptation we added children's developmental issues and stress management for parents. Due to the important nature of the topics of discipline and talking to your children about death, divorce and loss, we spent two sessions on each of these topics.

Objective 2

Training the staff at Providence to continue the program at the close of Goodwill's participation in the project was vital to success of the program. Very early in the sessions, it was decided that the Providence Family Support Center's staff would not be available for participation. However, a participant who demonstrated outstanding

leadership abilities and an impressive knowledge of parenting information was chosen to be trained as the next facilitator of the program.

The woman chosen served as the instructor's assistant, by helping in preparation of lessons, gathering materials and occasionally facilitating groups when the instructor had a scheduling conflict. This was possibly the best result of the program. The woman chosen expressed a great deal of pride in being asked and proved herself to be up to the challenge. She has since expressed an interest in becoming more involved in teaching and expects to continue with the curriculum in the future.

Objective 3 & 4

1. The original curriculum was used with a group of teenage-single mothers.
2. Attendance was mandatory and participants earned college credits toward completion of study.
3. The group of women at Providence were significantly older with children ranging in age from 4 through adult.
4. After an initial meeting with the staff at the center and potential group members, it was decided that the individuals would best be served by meeting as a support group. This would allow for open enrollment.
5. In light of recent welfare reform it was imperative that the women be available for training and work related appointments. Also, attendance was not mandatory nor was credit given for completion.
6. The original curriculum included a number of sessions that the Providence group decided were not appropriate for inclusion in the curriculum based on the ages of the

participant's children. For example, pottting training and choosing childcare were two of the modules that weren't relevant to this groups needs

Objective 5

In an effort to increase the amount of time parents spent reading to their children at home, the books used in that day's lesson were taken home by the participants and made part of the children's home library. The parents were encouraged to read the book to their children, and the following week they engaged in a short discussion about their children's reactions to the literature. The following is a list of books used in the curriculum adaptation.

Love You Forever: by Robert Munsch

Owl Babies: Waddell-Benson

Billy the Great: Rosa Guy

Dinosaur Beware: Marc Brown & Stephan Kiensky

Dinosaur Divorce: Marc Brown & Stephen Kiensky

Brown Bear, Brown: Bear Bill Martin & Eric Carle

Objective 6

In an effort to encourage parents to seek adult education services, a speaker from the nearby Allegheny Campus of the CCAC was brought in to provide an introduction to their adult education programs. Brochures and pamphlets listing other agencies were readily available to the participants.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on participants written comments and verbal interactions with staff, the course was very successful. (Appendix)

During the 16 week sessions the women formed close bonds with one another and reported being able to rely on each other for answers to tough questions about parenting. They developed an important network of support and counted on each other as friends. The atmosphere was relaxed and open. The children's books were a great incentive toward attendance.

Recommendations:

1. Make every effort to encourage participation by offering small gifts as incentives for attendance.
2. Create an environment where participants feel safe by expressing appreciation for those who: 1) acknowledge that they have made mistakes, 2) express opinions not necessarily shared by the group and 3) do not wish to express an opinion.
3. Make all the activities as connected to the lives and experiences of your participants. Add your own personal anecdotes.
4. Encourage and build trust with participants by establishing a set of rules (which participants help make) for the conduct of the sessions.

5. Maintain confidentiality of the group.
6. Use the curriculum as a guide, choosing the sections which most closely meet the needs of the participants
7. Recommended text for facilitators: **Helping Parents In Groups: A Leadership Handbbook** by Braun, Caplan, and Sonnenschein.

APPENDIX I

ADAPTED CURRICULUM GUIDE

GETTING ACQUAINTED

Goals: To help young parents become acquainted with each other and to talk about how the sessions will run.

Objectives:

1. Have participants interview each other using the "All About Me" sheet a guideline for questions.
2. Have each person introduce their partner to the class.
3. Read **I'll Love You Forever** by Robert Munsch and discuss that parenting is a life long process.

ATTACHMENT

Goal:

To introduce parents to the concept of attachment and the need this serves their children.

Objective:

To help parents identify their own feelings of attachment.

To assist parents in identifying their children's behavior and feelings of attachment to them.

To demonstrate to parents the meaning of transitional objects.

Methods and Procedures:

The instructor will:

1. Ask students to identify a belonging that they could not stand to be without or could not part with. Write a sentence or two about the object.
2. Read Owen by Kevin Henkes and facilitate a discussion about the meaning of attachment as an extension of the parent.
3. Ask the students to identify pressures they may feel from family and extended family concerning transitional objects.
4. Discuss how you comfort your child when he/she is upset. How does your child comfort herself/himself.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Goal:

To help parents become aware of all of the responsibilities involved in being a parent.

Objective:

1. To improve the ability of parents to make appropriate use of think time.
2. To help parents identify and recognize the many different roles that they balance in their daily lives.
3. To encourage parents to acknowledge their need to balance the time requirements and responsibilities of being a parent with having time for their own interests and needs.

Methods:

1. Brainstorm lists of "Hats" that mothers and fathers wear in their family.
2. Using a board or flip chart, draw a stick figure with a number of hats.
3. List all of the duties that come with wearing these hats.
4. Pair up with a partner and discuss how much time you need to do these tasks.
5. Come back together as a class and discuss findings and share ideas about ways to make the jobs and roles easier.
6. Distribute time management brochure, go over a few suggestions with the class.
7. Finish the session with the **book The Berenstain Bears and the Messy Room** by Stan and Jan Berenstain.
8. **Discussion topics**
 - * Describe your morning routine from when you awoke to when you arrived at the group. Is there anything that you want to change about this day?
 - * Describe your study for this day.
 - * Describe where, how much, and what kind of interruptions that you notice.
 - * Describe the time that you spent with your children.
 - * Describe your bedtime routine.
 - * How much TV did you watch?
 - * How much time did you spend on the phone?
 - * Describe the stressful part of your day.

FAMILIES READING TOGETHER

Goal:

To raise parents awareness of their role as their child's first teacher through reading books.

Objectives:

To identify reasons why reading to children is an important activity.

To assess parent's attitudes and knowledge of reading to children.

To encourage parents to begin to read to their infants and toddlers.

To increase the amount of time that parents spend reading to their children.

To demonstrate effective techniques and strategies for reading aloud to children.

To familiarize parents with age appropriate reading materials.

Methods and Procedures:

The instructor will read a children's book to the class modeling read aloud skills.

Provide reading attitude survey and have students discuss answers. (assessment)

Have class compile a list of reasons why to read to their children.

Distribute handout, "*7 Reasons to Read to Your Children*" and encourage discussion to reinforce old ideas and to introduce new ones.

Have the class compile a list of when to read to their children.

Distribute the handout, "*There's Always Room for a Book.*"

Have the class compile a list of where to read to their children.

Distribute the handouts, "*Reading Topics for Children*" and "*10 Tips for Choosing Good Books for Children of All Ages.*"

Have the class discuss the how to's of reading aloud.

Distribute the handout, "*Dos and Don'ts of Read Aloud.*"

SAFETY

Goal:

1. To help parents understand what they can do with their environment in order to protect their children from getting hurt.
2. To have parents become aware of safety issues inside and outside the houses by asking them to make a list of each.

Methods:

1. Ask the group the following questions:

Who would like to tell us about an accident that they may have been involved in as a child which could have been avoided? Give examples:

2. Break the participants into two groups

One group will be assigned to think about all possible things inside the house which can be a hazard. The other group will list all of the hazards for a child outside of the house

Discuss the findings and have the groups add to each others lists.

3. Review how children explore: by touching, walking, crawling, putting things in their mouths, etc.
4. Finish with a book about safety. **Dinosaurs Beware** and distribute it to the parents.
5. Distribute **"Parents Home Safety Handbook"** from Children's Hospital.
6. Homework: Make a list of safety hazards in each stage of development:
 - a) Stage I - Infancy (0-1)
 - b) Stage II - Toddler (1-3)
 - c) Stage III - Preschool (3-5)
 - d) Stage IV - School Age (6-8)

Talking to Children and Parents About Death, Divorce, and Loss

Goal:

To help parents to become aware of the psychological impact of death and loss and the stages of grieving.

Objective:

1. To enable parents to reflect on the losses and deaths that they have experienced in their lifetimes.
2. To enable children and parents to begin to understand the stages of death according to Elizabeth Kubler-Ross.
3. To help parents identify normal grieving behaviors in children.
4. To encourage parents to begin to find ways to talk about death with their children and to learn to listen to their children's feelings

Methods:

1. Instructor will read book: Everett Anderson's Goodbye by L. Clifton. Have participants discuss reactions to the book.
2. Have participants write down 1-3 ways that they have coped with a loss.
3. Instructor will present handout, "*Coping with Loss.*" Class will share in reading handout and discuss their reactions.
4. Instructor will read a book about divorce: At Daddy's on Saturdays by Linda Giraro. Discuss the similarities of loss, divorce and death.

BED-TIME ISSUES AND FEARS

Goals:

To help parents understand that bedtime can be stressful because of separation from parents and childhood fears. Parents need to develop a positive, patient, but firm approach to handling children at bedtime.

Objectives:

1. To help parents learn more about the range of sleeping patterns in children and what is realistic to expect of their child.
2. To teach parents techniques with which to guide their child's sleep.
3. To help parents learn about common fears in children and their causes.
4. To help parents learn how to diminish the impact on their child of the child's fears and nightmares.

Methods:

1. Begin by reading the book: Sam's Worries by Mary Ann McDonald.
2. Ask participants about their fears. Take a minute to think about what you're afraid of.
3. Discussion questions
 - Do you remember being afraid of anything as a child?
 - Describe something that you were afraid of and what helped you to overcome it.

* Describe how you might help your own child handle a fear of one of the following:

- a) the doctor
- b) going to school
- c) the dark
- d) Halloween
- e) Santa Claus

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE: SETTING LIMITS

Goals:

To help parent understand that discipline means disciple or teacher and that our role as a parent is to teach self control.

Objectives:

To teach parents general guidelines about limit-setting, including its purpose and the importance of consistency.

To have parents share the reality of what it feels like to set limits for young children.

To help parents understand how to set appropriate limits for their child's developmental age.

To help parents understand a number of limit setting techniques.

Methods:

1. Have the class brainstorm on why we set limits. The following can be added to their lists.

- * teaching children to avoid danger
- * helping children to attain socially acceptable behaviors
- * teaching children to have regards for others as well as themselves.
- * showing our children that we care for them; children feel more secure
- * limits to follow
- * helping children control themselves
- * putting a sense of organization into children's worlds.
- * Helping ourselves and our children know what to expect of each other.

2. On a note card, have parents describe a situation where there is a conflict with their child. Exchange the cards with others in the class and have each parent read the card they receive and offer suggestions for handling the conflict.

3. Present class with a handout that describes techniques that help with limit setting.

4. Read **Grandpa's Face** by Eloise Greenfield.

5. Distribute the book, **Discipline Without Shouting or Spanking** by T. Wyckoff, Ph.D. and Barbara C. Unell.

FEELINGS AND SELF ESTEEM IN CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Goals:

To help young parents explore the impact of positive feelings that they have towards themselves and their children as well as the impact of negative feelings towards themselves and their children.

Objectives:

1. To help young parents identify feelings and emotions that they have about themselves.
2. To help young parents identify feelings and emotions that they have with their children and to explore the choices that they have in responding to various situations.
3. To help young parents to understand that how a child's self-esteem and confidence develops is directly related to how we speak to them.

Methods:

1. Brainstorm feelings and write them on the board and on index cards.
2. Pass out index cards with feeling words and ask students which words make them feel good about themselves to go to one side of the room and words that make them feel bad about themselves to go to another part of the room.
3. Have the class get into two groups. Group one writes two sentences for each of the words on the board in the following format: "I feel _____ when _____."

4. Have class get into two groups and write two sentences for each word on the board in the following format: "I feel _____ When my child _____."

Facilitate a discussion using these questions:

- When a parent has these feelings does it make them love their more or less?
- Is it difficult to experience negative feelings?
- Does a parent sometimes have to put their feelings aside to meet the needs of their child?

5. Ask the group what they learned about their feelings:

6. Killer statements: To explore the kinds of words or phrases parents use with their children on a day to day basis, and how these affect their children.

- a) Brain storm hurtful words or statements that they remember feeling when they were growing up.
- b) Make a list of these on the board.

7. Discuss the importance of using words to describe behavior rather than insulting children's self worth or self esteem. For example, "I feel angry when you bang on the table." Instead of, "Why are you acting so stupid?"

8. Read the book: **Billy the Great** by Rosa Guy. Give each participant the book to keep.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Goals:

To help parents become acquainted with tools for managing stress.

Objectives:

1. The parent will understand the dynamics of stress, recognize the signs of stress and use constructive coping skills.
2. The parents will be aware of how stress effects their lives.

Methods:

1. Brainstorm what the word stress means.
2. Have participants think about what causes stress in their lives. List them.
3. Exchange list and have participants help each other think of ways to manage stress.
4. Read: Alexander and the Horrible, No Good, Very Bad by Judith Viora.

DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES

Goals:

To increase parents understanding of children's development.

Objectives:

1. To help parents increase understanding of children's social development.
2. To help parents explore ways of parenting children that is consistent with their development.
3. To encourage parents to continue learning about the stages of development.

Methods and Procedures:

1. On the board list the following stages of development:

Infancy 0-2
Toddler 2-4
Early School Age 5-7
Middle School Age 8-12
Early Adolescence 13-18
Later Adolescence 18-21

2. Encourage discussion by asking parents to write about which stage their child is in.

What are their jobs at this stage? What is your job?

Think about the following questions as you write:

How well do you think the child is doing?
How well do you think you're doing?

3. Discuss how parenting issues change as children change.

A great book for distribution this week is a book of parenting quotes. The three listed were ones included in our curriculum:

The ABC's of Parenting: published by Great Quations Co.

101 Ways to Tell Your Child "I Love You" by Vicky Lansky.

The Joys of Parenthood: by Jan Blaustone

CULMINATING ACTIVITY

Goal:

To encourage class to plan and participate in a parent/child party to celebrate their successful completion of the parenting course.

Objectives:

1. To communicate interest and caring in each others children.
2. To celebrate their success.
3. Give gift of children's book to each child.
4. Give a certificate of completion to each parent.
5. Ask each participant to evaluate course.

APPENDIX III

EVALUATION COMMENTS

"I enjoyed our classes very much. We learned in a relaxed atmosphere. The children's books were an added bonus."

Barbara J.
one child

"This was the best class ever at the Providence Family Support Center."

Beth R.
two children

"I felt like the Parenting Program helped me to deal with some issues about my kids. I loved the books."

Michele H.
two children

"I now know how to talk to my kids differently."

Linda R.
eight children



PROVIDENCE FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

711 WEST COMMONS • PITTSBURGH • PA • 15212-5239
(412) 231-6730 • FAX (412) 231-3830

Judith Aaronson, Director
Goodwill Literacy Initiative
2600 East Carson St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15203

May 5, 1997

Dear Judith,

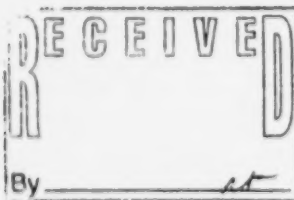
I am writing to thank you for sharing Penny Lang with us this year. We are so glad that you included us in your programming which resulted from the grant which you received.

Penny's parenting class has been a huge success here. Her easy non-judgmental, supportive style of running the group made it extremely popular. She was able to attract between six and ten women each week. For that alone, we are grateful!

As I observed her last class today, I could hear the women express real sadness at the prospect of losing her. They have a real attachment to her. I know she truly enjoyed being here, as well.

If there is any way we could arrange to have her coming here on a regular basis in the fall, I would be most interested in discussing the possibility. Please let me know!

Again, please accept my sincere thanks for all that you at Goodwill Literacy contributed to us at Providence Family Support Center.



Sincerely,

Deb Dunton

Corporate Office:
Providence Connections, Inc.
9000 Babcock Blvd
Allison Park, PA 15101-2793
(412) 931-5241
FAX (412) 635-5416

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711 West Commons
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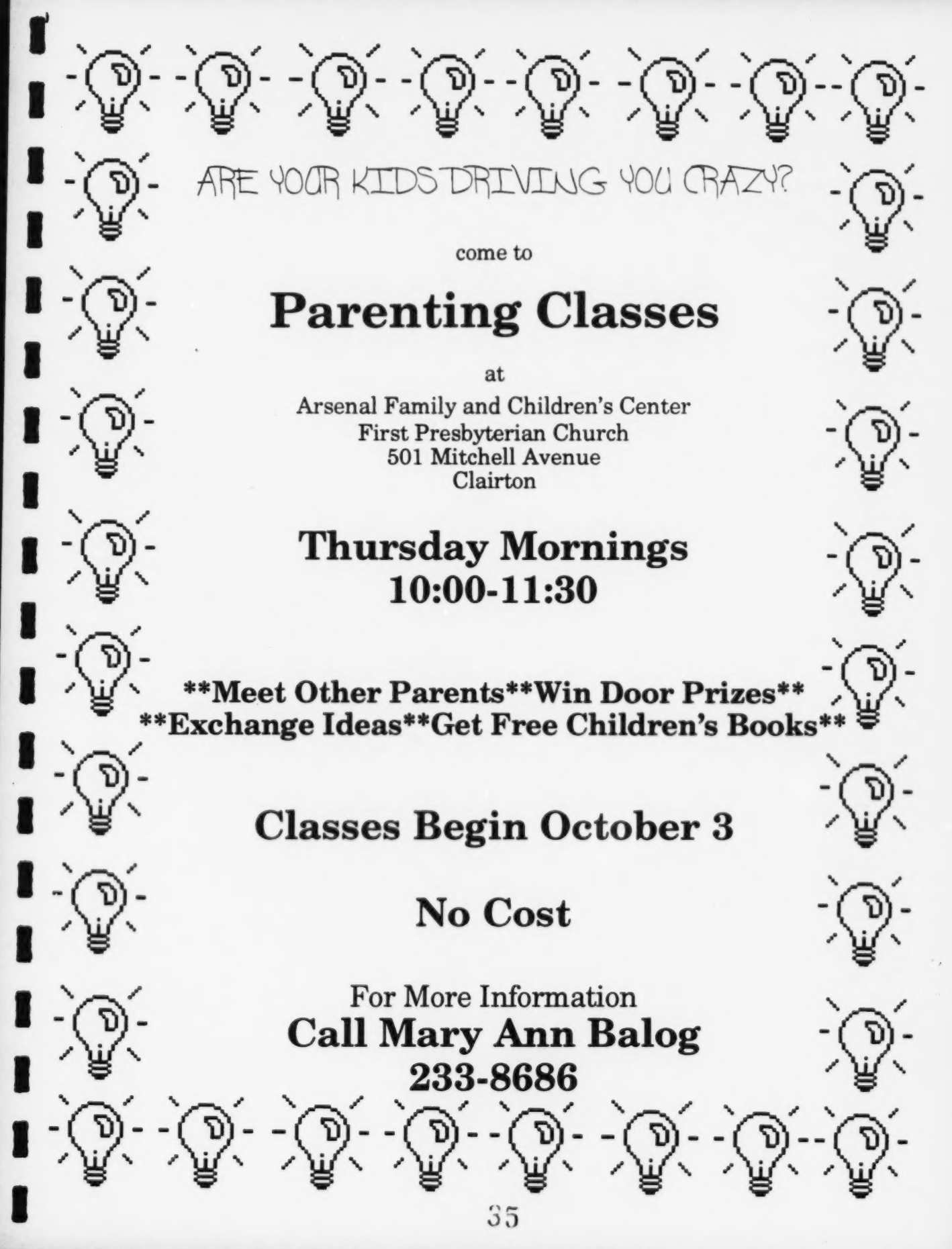
Locations:
Providence Child Care Center - South
400 Hoodridge Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15234-1793
(412) 531-3360

Providence Child Care Center - North
200 Ridge Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15212-5239
(412) 231-6190

Amelia House
Clarion, PA 16214-8911

APPENDIX II

SAMPLE RECRUITMENT FLYER



ARE YOUR KIDS DRIVING YOU CRAZY?

come to

Parenting Classes

at

Arsenal Family and Children's Center
First Presbyterian Church
501 Mitchell Avenue
Clairton

Thursday Mornings
10:00-11:30

****Meet Other Parents**Win Door Prizes****
****Exchange Ideas**Get Free Children's Books****

Classes Begin October 3

No Cost

For More Information
Call Mary Ann Balog
233-8686

APPENDIX IV

AGENCY SUPPORT

TOUCHPOINT

Newsletter of the Providence Family Support Center
by Joyce Blackhall
May 1997, Volume 6

Providence Moms Update.....

Congratulations to Lorraine Krippe! After a very determined job search, Lorraine has recently accepted a position as a Mental Health Specialist with "Miryam's House", a transitional living facility for drug addicted and homeless women. Lorraine's compassionate nature will make her an excellent person for this job, and we wish her all the best in her new endeavor!

Barbra Jones continues to work diligently at her seamstress training with the "North Side's Own" business training. Barb and the other women in the class are determined to learn the skills that will help them to become successful entrepreneurs, and they deserve a rousing "well done!"

Beth Robinson and Michele Hilton are hard at work also recruiting participants for the "Super Pantry", which will be held here at the Center this month. As of this writing, seventeen people have signed up, thanks to Michele and Beth's efforts, and the "Super Pantry"'s success will be their doing. Great work!

We were all saddened to hear that Helen Williams' mom, Sarah, recently fell and broke her hip. After coming through surgery with flying colors, Sarah is now comfortably situated in a nursing home, where she will be gently cared for. Our best wishes go

out to Helen and her family as they deal with this transition.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE ADVOCATE ROOM ON MONDAYS????????????????

Each Monday morning since the beginning of the year, Providence Family Support Center moms have been meeting with Penny Lang for a special parenting class, titled "Parenting Skills Through Children's Literature". This workshop is a program of the Goodwill Literacy Initiative and is funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The project delivers traditional parenting issues through reading and examining of children's books. A number of weeks, the moms are given the book to add to their personal library. Penny, who facilitates the group, says, "We have been having a great time. The moms are all enthusiastic learners who want the best for their children. We have lots of lively discussion and, although we may not always agree, we always learn from each other."



MAY BIRTHDAYS



Terri Glenn.... 10th
Latika Davis.... 25th
Debbie Brown.... 25th
Taurean Turner (son of Deb Brown).... 27th
Deb Dunton.... 30th
Devin Brown (son of Joyce Blackhall)... 30th

Happy birthday to you all!!!!

MAKE YOUR OWN BUBBLES!

Yields: 2 cups

1 c. Green Dishwashing detergent
½ c. Glycerine (available at drug stores)
½ c. Water

1. In a metal can or a plastic container, combine the detergent, glycerine, and water. Mix thoroughly.
2. Dip a wand into the container, making sure a film of bubble liquid is stretched across it. Blow gently for super long-lasting bubbles!!

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APPENDIX V

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

There's always room for a book.

Books make waiting easier for everyone. Don't leave home without one.

- Carry a book in the baby's diaper bag
- Bring books to doctor's and dentist's offices
- Keep books in the car for kids. Let one parent read while the other drives.

When and Where to read

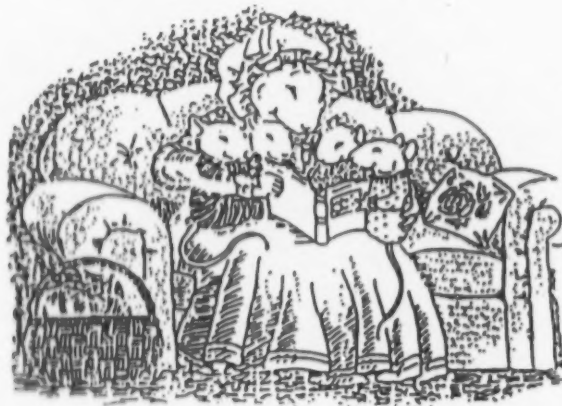
- at bedtime
- while in the bathtub
- while on the potty chair
- when you're waiting
- while you are riding in the car
- when you are shopping
- Anytime! Anyplace!

Reading aloud may be the most important thing you can do to help a child develop a love of reading and reading skills.

Reading aloud is for everyone: mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, big brothers, big sisters, grandparents, friends!

Seven Reasons to Read To Your Children

1. Because when you hold them and give them this attention, they know that you love them.
2. Because reading to them will encourage them to become readers.
3. Because children's books today are so good that they are fun even for adults.
4. Children's book illustrations often are the best, giving them a lifelong feeling for good art.
5. Because, until they learn to read for themselves, they will think you are magic.
6. Because for that short space of time, they will stay clean and quiet.
7. Because, if you do, they may then let you read in peace.



READING TOPICS FOR CHILDREN

Ages 0-2

- Alphabet Books
- Counting Books
- Mother Goose Rhymes
- Nursery Songs
- One-Word Books, cloth or paperback

Ages 3-5

- Alphabet Books
- Books on Color
- Books on Shapes
- Counting Books
- Mother Goose Rhymes
- Nature Books
- Participation Books
- Predictable Stories
- Wordless Picture Books

Ages 6-7

- Animal Stories
- Family Stories
- Folk Tales and Fables
- Fantasy
- Humorous Stories
- Informational Books
- Poetry Books
- Recipe Books
- Riddles

Ages 8-9

- Animal Stories
- Biographies
- Family Stories
- Folk Tales
- Tall Tales
- Fantasy
- Friendship
- Informational Books
- Poetry Books

Ages 10-12

- Biographies
- Craft Books
- Family Stories
- Friendship
- Informational Books
- Mysteries
- Poetry
- Romance

People who can help you find good books:

School Librarians, Public Librarians and Teachers.

Do's and Don'ts of Read Aloud

Do:

- Begin reading to children as soon as possible. The younger you start them, the better.
- Read as often as you and the child have time for.
- Vary the length and subject matter of your readings.
- Occasionally read above the children's intellectual level and challenge their minds.
- Make sure the children can see the pictures easily, when reading a picture book.
- Use plenty of expression when reading. Change your voice to fit the dialogue.
- Read slowly enough for the child to build mental pictures of what she just heard you read.
- Lead by example. Make sure your children see you reading for pleasure. Share with them your enthusiasm for whatever you read.

Don'ts

- Don't read stories that you don't enjoy yourself. Your dislike will show in the reading, and that defeats your purpose.
- Don't continue reading a book once it is obvious that it was a poor choice. Admit the mistake and choose another.
- Don't start a reading if you are not going to have enough time to do it justice. Having to stop after one or two pages only serves to frustrate, rather than stimulate the child's interest in reading.
- Don't be unnerved by questioning during the reading, particularly from very young children. Answer the questions patiently and then resume reading.
- Don't use the book as a threat—"If you don't clean your room, no storytonight." This may lead to negative feelings about books.

From: The Read Aloud Handbook by Jim Trelease, 1985.



Helping Persons Cope with Change, Crisis, and Loss

It's natural to feel more or less inadequate when someone—perhaps a friend or relative—tells you their troubles. Actually, you often can be of real assistance—perhaps far more than you think. Nonprofessionals (neighbors, friends, or relatives) who show warmth and common sense can be a wonderful help in many instances.

Following are some suggestions for helping persons close to you when they are temporarily upset or disoriented after a change, crisis, or loss in their lives.

Show by Words and Actions that You Care

Small, kind deeds and the expression of sincere feelings of affection, admiration, or concern for a troubled person mean a lot. Our society has been accused of a "taboo on tenderness." Simple, open affection and honest compliments embarrass some of us. It is well to remember, however, that a friendly arm around troubled shoulders, a few words of support and encouragement, or an opportunity for a long talk can help a lot. Let the person experience your warmth, concern, and availability.

Help the Person to Accept Help

One way people avoid facing a crisis is to deny they need help. Studies show that people who have difficulty working through a crisis or loss are inclined to brush off offers of assistance and persist in the fantasy that everything is all right. The person who acknowledges that he or she is in trouble, actively looks for help, and gratefully accepts it is on the way to a healthy solution of the crisis.

Help with Everyday Tasks

The notion that a person in trouble needs to be soothed and reassured is a misleading one. But the intuitive feeling that a person in trouble needs assistance with small everyday tasks is right and sound. Examples are the neighbor who cooks dinner for a friend with an ill child, the husband or friend who puts the children to bed and does the dishes when a woman is mourning her father's death, the person who quietly assumes an extra amount of work when a co-worker is having trouble at home, and the friend who takes care of a baby for an afternoon or evening. All are recognizing that a crisis disorganizes and disorients the

energies that people in trouble have for ordinary things because so much energy, if they are to survive the crisis, must go into recognition of the pain, grief, or trouble. Especially if we can give this help unassumingly—not with the suggestion that the person we are helping is so weak or incompetent as to require it—such simple kindness and thoughtfulness can be a real support.

Help the Person Confront the Crisis or Loss and "Talk it Out"

Discussing troubles has two chief values. It is a method of expressing emotions, and it helps to get rid of their effects. And putting feelings into words can help a person see the situation more objectively. Just knowing that someone is aware of our hurt feelings, worries, or difficult decisions can mean a great deal. Burdens shared with a friend are often lighter to carry. As someone once said, "A joy shared is doubled, a sorrow shared is halved."

Help the troubled person talk about and realize the danger, the pain, the trouble, the feeling of loss, the real elements of the crisis. Help the person to speak of unspoken fears, to grieve, and even to cry.

Be a Good Listener

If the other person is to talk the problem out, you must be a good listener. Good listening encourages people to talk about their problems. Here are a few ways of listening to others:

- Stop talking. You cannot listen while you are talking.
- Try to put yourself in the other person's place. Trying to recall how you felt in similar circumstances or what you know of how others have been affected by similar circumstances may help. Don't, however, assume that the person's responses are or should be the same.
- Show that you are paying attention. Relax physically; feel the presence of the chair as you are sitting on it. Let your posture be comfortable and your movements natural. For example, if you usually move and gesture a good deal, feel free to do so at this time.
- Initiate and maintain eye contact with the person. If you are going to listen to someone, look at him or her. A varied use of eye contact is most effective; staring fixedly or with undue intensity usually makes the person uneasy.

Take your cues for response or action from what the person is saying. Don't jump from subject to subject or interrupt. If you can't think of anything to say, go back to something the person said earlier in the conversation and ask a question about that. There is no need to talk about yourself or your opinions.

- To help the person begin, use "door openers," open-ended questions that allow the person to go into the subject at length.
"Tell me about it."
"Would you like to talk about it?"
"Let's discuss it."

"I'm listening."

"This seems really important to you."

- Keep encouraging the person to talk. Here, little things can make a big difference. Any one of these tend to keep the person talking, if you are sincerely interested and genuinely listening.
Saying "Umm hmmm"
Nodding
"Oh?" "So?" "Then?" "And?"

The repetition of one or two key words.

"Tell me more."

"How did you feel about that?"

"What does that mean to you?"

- Ask questions and listen to the answers. Especially try to find out how the person *feels*.
- Don't guess what the person is going to say and answer that without really listening.
- Check out what you understand the person to be saying to be sure you're getting their meaning. Repeat what you think the person said, asking if you are right: "Is this how you feel?" or "Is that it?"
- Try to avoid judging the person. This can stop communication.

Don't Give the Troubled Person False Assurance

Persons in trouble desperately want to be reassured, and all our feelings urge us to give that reassurance. But the "there, there, everything will be all right" approach does not help. It relegates them to the role of a child and makes them weaker, rather than stronger. It may actually be a disservice; everything may *not* be all right. The kind of reassurance that persons in grave difficulty need is not the meaningless comfort that the crisis will take care of itself, but rather our statement of faith that they will be strong enough to work it out even if it is not all right. Let them know that you are

available and would like to work with them in finding something that can help—preferably to help them help themselves. Lend a shoulder as an equal, instead of reassuring like a parent. This provides a more important kind of reassurance—the reassurance that you have faith in their ability to handle the crisis.

Don't Encourage Blaming Others

A typical stage of mourning is anger and a desire to blame others for the condition or loss. Research has shown that persons who have not coped very successfully with their crises have an overwhelming tendency to dwell on the people or things they imagined were responsible for their trouble. Blaming is a way of avoiding the truth, of looking at an ephemeral might-have-been instead of looking at the problem at hand. Don't encourage persons in trouble to speculate on the villains in the case with the idea that they will feel better if they can place the blame on someone for the trouble. Blaming may make it harder and less likely that they will come out of the crisis strengthened.

Encourage a Presentation of All the Facts and All Constructive Possibilities

Emotional tension can easily lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation, so it is important that the facts be clear. It's amazing how often people make important decisions without taking time to ascertain all the facts and to look into all the options. Ask the person to tell you about the change, crisis, or loss—when it started, how it occurred or developed, what consequences have resulted, how it has affected them, how they feel about it.

Following are some specific steps you may want to use to guide

troubled persons:

- Help them sort out the pieces of the problem they are facing.
- Help them separate those parts which they can do something about from those where they are helpless. There's no use wasting energy on the latter.
- Encourage them to describe what they have tried; there's no use repeating things that haven't worked.
- Encourage them to describe or discover other possible solutions: "How else might this problem be settled?" "What other approaches are there?" "What other information is needed before a wise decision can be made?"
- Help them examine each of these in terms of their probable consequences: "What will probably happen if you...?"
- Help them to decide which of the various alternatives they want to try now.

Encourage the Person to Focus on the Practical Future

Thinking about the future is much healthier than dwelling on past wrongs and mistakes. Granted, spouses, neighbors, children, and relatives do make minor as well as major mistakes. Outside events may also cause injustices, inconvenience, and discomfort. A woman miscarries. A loved one dies. A man loses his job. A child fails in school. A family has to move. Bemoaning misfortunes does not help to build a better future. Heaping blame on other people or on fate may lessen willingness to accept responsibility for current actions and may prevent persons from doing the best they can to cope.

Naturally, you do not want to criticize those you are trying to help—they may interpret criticism as blanket rejection. Instead, aim at guiding them gently by showing your interest, attention, and sympathy when they begin to talk about what they are going to do now to solve or at least lessen present problems. If the person does not voluntarily indicate such intentions, you may—again, gently—want to raise some question such as, "All right, what can you do about this matter?"

Some steps in this process probably include the following:

- Encourage them to plan just how they will begin doing what they have decided to do; the plan should be realistic with achievable goals.
- Encourage them to commit themselves to doing this, beginning soon and at an agreed-upon time.
- If they resist beginning to act on the problem, help them discuss and resolve these feelings.
- Point out that as they begin to do something, however small, about the situation, they'll probably start to feel less depressed and more hopeful.
- Have them phone you to let you know how the action plan worked, or make a date to see them again soon.
- Help them find the spiritual, interpersonal, and inner resources to cope.
- Each time you talk to them, have them describe what happened, praise them for successes in carrying out the action plan (however small these successes), help them rethink their action goals (what's the next step?), and repeat those parts which are necessary to help them continue coping.

Encourage Sensible Health Habits

The body influences emotions and mental functions. People are particularly likely to be upset when they are hungry or overtired. You might remind a troubled friend that when problems seem insoluble, new perspectives sometimes are gained simply by a good night's sleep and well-balanced wholesome meals. Encourage some form of exercise to the point of fatigue. Walking is a great tension reliever!

Respect Privacy

When persons are upset they may tell intimate secrets. Later they may be sorry they talked so freely. If you are listening to a friend's troubles, try *not* to lead her or him into revealing information they may later regret.

If your friends and relatives do mention an act that is usually condemned, try especially hard to show that you support them as precious human beings, regardless of their past actions. The value of every human person, no matter how they have acted, is basic to the philosophy of giving help to others.

Resist any temptation to pass on confidences that have come from intimate conversations. Persons who confide in you can be comfortable with aid received only if they feel sure their privacy will be respected. If you violate this confidence, they are almost certain to eventually learn of it and any trust that has developed will be lost. Similarly, sharing with them conversations others have confided in you will suggest that you will do the same with their confidences.

Know Your Limitation

Serious problems need
and experienced help

counseling by a psychiatrist, family service agency, mental health or human development center, clinical psychologist, or accredited marriage counselor can often supply the help needed. Group help from psychotherapy groups or Alcoholics Anonymous also meets the needs of many. If you become involved with someone who you think may need more help than you can provide, you will probably want to scout around for possible referrals.

Most everyday human troubles, however, are not serious enough to need this kind of assistance. A wise, warm, kindhearted spouse, parent, or friend can do much to ease the emotional distress that comes from the worries, disappointments, and conflicts of life.

If enough of us are aware of these ways in which we can help each other in times of trouble, more and more people can be assisted in working through the inevitable life hazards that confront us all.

As Harvard psychologist Gerald Caplan says, "It is remarkable to see the power that ordinary people have to adapt to reality, however unpleasant. They have a great deal more strength than we often give them credit for. Unassisted, in a time of crisis this strength may fail them. But if we recognize it and build it up, we can help each other through times of trouble."

Written by Ronald Pitzer, Family Life Specialist, University of Minnesota Extension, 1984.

Distributed by Marilyn M. Furry, Assistant Professor, Agricultural and Extension Education.

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